

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously presented) A method for retrieving client boot information in a network environment with multiple boot servers, comprising:
 - initiating at a client an initial request for client configuration information;
 - sending from the client the initial request for client configuration information to a first boot server;
 - receiving at the client a boot server list if the client configuration information is not found on the first boot server; and
 - sending from the client a configuration information request for the client configuration information to each server in the boot server list until the client configuration information is found or a request has been sent to every server in the boot server list.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the initial request, the list request, and the configuration information request is a trivial file transfer protocol request.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - receiving, from the first boot server, an error message that indicates that the client information is not found on the first boot server.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - receiving the client configuration information from an associated boot server in response to the client configuration information being found.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising:
 - sending a boot file request for remaining boot files to the associated boot server based on the client configuration information.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether the entries in the boot server list were pre-ordered, in order to better support load balancing among boot servers, prior to transmission to the client;
and
if the list is found to be ordered, sending a configuration information request for the client configuration information to each server in the boot server list in the order given.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
sending a configuration information request for the client configuration information to each server in the boot server list in order of increasing network distance, where distance is estimated from available network configuration information when there was no indication that the order of the original boot server list was optimized in order to better support load balancing.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the method is performed by a network bootstrap program.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the method is performed on a client computer.
10. (Previously presented) A method for providing client boot information in a network environment with multiple boot servers, comprising:
receiving at a boot server an initial request for client configuration information from a client, wherein the initial request is initiated at a client; and
sending from the boot server the boot server list to the client if the client configuration information is not found.
11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein at least one of the initial request and the list request is a trivial file transfer protocol request.

12. (Original) The method of claim 10, further comprising:
adding an indication to the boot server list to inform the client that the list is being provided in optimal order to support load balancing among boot servers.
13. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the method is performed on a boot server.
14. (Previously presented) An apparatus for retrieving client boot information in a network environment with multiple boot servers, comprising:
initiating means for initiating at a client an initial request for client configuration information;
first sending means for sending from a client an initial request for client configuration information to a first boot server;
receipt means for receiving at the client a boot server list if the client configuration information is not found on the first boot server; and
second sending means for sending from the client a configuration information request for the client configuration information to each server in the boot server list until the client configuration information is found or a request has been sent to every server in the boot server list.
15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein at least one of the initial request, the list request, and the configuration information request is a trivial file transfer protocol request.
16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14, further comprising:
means for receiving, from the first boot server, an error message that indicates that the client information is not found on the first boot server.
17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14, further comprising:
means for receiving the client configuration information from an associated boot server in response to the client configuration information being found; and

means for sending a boot file request for remaining boot files to the associated boot server based on the client configuration information.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14, further comprising:

means for determining whether the entries in the boot server list were pre-ordered, in order to better support load balancing among boot servers, prior to transmission to the client; and

if the list is found to be ordered, means for sending a configuration information request for the client configuration information to each server in the boot server list in the order given.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14, further comprising:

means for sending a configuration information request for the client configuration information to each server in the boot server list in order of increasing network distance, where distance is estimated from available network configuration information when there was no indication that the order of the original boot server list was optimized in order to better support load balancing.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the apparatus is client computer running a network bootstrap program.

21. (Previously presented) An apparatus for providing client boot information in a network environment with multiple boot servers, comprising:

receipt means for receiving at a boot server an initial request for client configuration information from a client, wherein the initial request is initiated at a client; and

sending means for sending from the boot server the boot server list to the client if the client configuration information is not found.

22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein at least one of the initial request and the list request is a trivial file transfer protocol request.

23. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, further comprising:
means for adding an indication to the boot server list to inform the client that the list is given in optimal order to support load balancing among boot servers.
24. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the apparatus is a boot server.
25. (Previously presented) A computer program product, in a computer readable medium, for retrieving client boot information in a network environment with multiple boot servers, comprising:
instructions for initiating at a client an initial request for client configuration information;
instructions for sending from a client an initial request for client configuration information to a first boot server;
instructions for receiving at the client a boot server list if the client configuration information is not found on the first boot server; and
instructions for sending from the client a configuration information request for the client configuration information to each server in the boot server list until the client configuration information is found or a request has been sent to every server in the boot server list.
26. (Previously presented) A computer program product, in a computer readable medium, for providing client boot information in a network environment with multiple boot servers, comprising:
instructions for receiving at a boot server an initial request for client configuration information from a client, wherein the initial request is initiated at a client; and
instructions for sending from the boot server the boot server list to the client if the client configuration information is not found.